

difference accounts for the leaves of *Amphicarpa* usually appearing acute at the apex, whereas those of *Strophostyles* appear obtuse or only acutish.—JULIAN A. STEYERMARK, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois.

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SPRING FLORA OF MISSOURI.—In his new "Spring Flora of Missouri,"<sup>1</sup> which treats some fourteen hundred flowering plants in blossom by June first, Dr. Julian A. Steyermark has brilliantly succeeded in combining simplified terminology with precise scientific accuracy and authoritativeness. Though he dismisses the Gramineae, Cyperaceae and Juncaceae with brief mention, Dr. Steyermark points out that these groups of plants are to form the basis of a future publication devoted exclusively to them.

Written particularly for all persons interested in flowering plants, the book is well printed, with few typographical errors, on an excellent grade of paper and is bound in a durable buckram. Though designed to include the spring flora of neighboring states, as well as of Missouri, its use would seem to be restricted primarily to the latter, especially since distribution data for each species are given for Missouri alone. From a teacher's point of view, the utility of the book would have been further enhanced by brief mention, if only by means of abbreviations, of the North American range of each species. Along with the concise, non-technical descriptions of each species, Dr. Steyermark has occasionally included information regarding poisonous properties, and, in the case of dermatitis caused by Poison Ivy, he has even suggested detailed remedies. Such added notes serve to make the book of greater value and interest to the layman.

The non-technical keys to such difficult families of plants as the Umbelliferae, wherein dependence upon mature fruit-characteristics has been heretofore an almost universal practice, are constructed upon simpler but, perhaps, as equally accurate leaf- and inflorescence-characters. Whenever it has been necessary to use a convenient technical term, an accompanying diagram often serves to make the meaning clear. Furthermore, a short glossary of the relatively few scientific terms employed is provided at the back of the book. Adjacent to the glossary of terms there is an interesting list of "English Meanings of Scientific Species Names," a feature which, for the average layman or college student, should add much to an understanding of taxonomic nomenclature, especially since a knowledge of Latin and Greek is no longer a foundation-stone of education. Besides the diagrams illustrating technical terms, the keys are replete with line-drawings which add significantly to the general usage of the book.

Apparently as a result of employing several artists for illustrating the book, there is a pronounced lack of uniformity in styles of drawing. For example, on Plate 100, page 365, *Viola cucullata* is drawn

<sup>1</sup> STEYERMARK, J. A. *Spring Flora of Missouri*. vii. and 582 pp. Published by the Missouri Botanical Garden (St. Louis) and the Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago). Set up and printed by the Ovid Bell Press, Fulton, Mo. 1940.

with heavily shaded leaves, whereas the adjacent illustrations, as of the leaves of *V. papilionacea*, are represented (except for veins) merely in outline; or, on Plate 138, page 480, the illustration of *Penstemon Cobaeus* (fig. 3) is heavily shaded, whereas the other species figured on the page are not. Plates 21 (p. 95), 22 (p. 97) and 23 (p. 99), mainly of the Orchidaceae, appear to be done uniformly with heavy shading, but many of the plates of other families are figured by more simple, outline drawings. Yet such variation in style of illustration is not a serious fault, for it scarcely detracts from the high level of excellence of the entire work.

Differences of opinion may well arise with respect to Dr. Steyermark's taxonomic treatment of such plants as *Erythronium albidum* and *E. mesochoreum* which, by him, are maintained as distinct species. Yet Dr. H. W. Rickett<sup>1</sup> has clearly shown that, at least for certain regions in Missouri, the specific distinctions between the two "species" of *Erythronium* definitely break down, so that *E. mesochoreum* is more logically to be considered a variant ("ecotype") of *E. albidum*.

On the whole, however, the "Spring Flora of Missouri" is carefully and critically done, so that it should find wide and enthusiastic reception at the hands of all those amateurs and professionals alike, who enjoy becoming acquainted with the rich native flora of Missouri. Indeed, this book may well pave the way for more comprehensive state or regional manuals, written in a less technical fashion than has been adhered to heretofore, without a loss of scientific accuracy.—WILLIAM B. DREW, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

<sup>1</sup> RHODORA, xxxix. 101-105 (1937).

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